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| Notice of Allowability | Application No. | Applicant(s) | |
| | 09/628,479 | THEIR ET AL. | |
| | Examiner JAGDISH PATEL | Art Unit 3624 | |

-- *The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address.*

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to AMENDMENT FILED 9/30/04.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,3-6,8-13,15,16,18,19,31 and 33.
3. The drawings filed on 31 July 2000 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some*
 - c) None
 of the:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of
 Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. This communication is in response to amendment filed 9/30/04.

Response to Amendment

2. Claims 20-30 have been canceled. Claims 31 and 33 have been amended.

Claims 1,3-6, 8-13, 15,16, 18, 19,31 and 33 are allowed.

Reasons for Allowance

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The claimed inventions pertain to generating a budget report in an organization having a hierarchical structure including a plurality of levels of contributors who participate in the budgeting process.

4. The following prior art references have been deemed most relevant to the allowed claim(s):

Morgan et al. (US Pat. 5,799,286) disclose an automated activity-based management system for a business organization having costs associated with its people, facilities, and equipment to produce products and/or provide services. Such a business organization typically generates traditional general ledger accounting information and human resources information. This traditional accounting information is used along with information directed to activities, equipment usage and facilities utilization to generate costs associated with activities performed by the organization.

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DiGiorgio et al. (US Pat. 6,418,420) teaches a budget information and creation system includes a budgetary information database that has numerical data and textual identifiers imported from a remote site. The numerical data are extracted from the remote site into a spreadsheet application, and the textual identifiers are extracted from the remote site into a word processing application. An interface with a user for permitting the user to create a budget for a subdivision of the remote site uses at least some of the numerical data and textual identifiers. The created budget is transmitted to the remote site. A budget projection system permits the user to import and view a prior budget for a subdivision of the remote site using at least some of the numerical data and textual identifiers. The user is permitted to enter a projection variable, and the system calculates a projected budget based upon the projection variable and the prior budget.

Wainscott et al. (WO 96/30852) teaches a method of and system for budgeting and planning of an organization. The reference includes three major processes involved in preparing a budget and plan. First process is the population of an initial working budget and updated forecast. This process creates the initial budget based on the input data and various assumptions of future changes and growth policy guidelines. Second process is finalization of the budget and periodic updates of the forecast, which allows budget managers to modify the initial budget to reflect their needs and goals. Distribution of budget and plan information is third process which involves reporting budget via on-line viewing.

Claims 1,3-6, 8-9 are allowed because the prior art of record including the aforementioned closest prior art discussed above fails to teach or suggest a method of generating a budget report which include at least the following novel feature:

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Executing software on the server to perform a reconciliation process to reconcile target data captured from a set of analysts and forecast data captured from a set of contributors according to a multi-level organizational model at least by selecting one or more of the contributors associated with a current level of the organizational model, receiving review information from the selected contributors, wherein the review information indicates whether the selected contributors accept or reject the forecast data in view of the captured target data and automatically updating the current level based upon review information.

Claims 10-13, 31 and 33 are allowed because prior art fails to teach or suggest a budgeting system comprising:

A server (or alternatively means) which selectively presents forecast data captured from a set of contributors and target data from a set of analysts to a subset of contributors with a current level of a multi-level model of an organization having a plurality of hierarchically arranged nodes, each node corresponding to at least one of the contributors, increments the current level when all of the contributors associated with nodes of the current level accept the forecast data and decrements the current level when at least one of the contributors associated with nodes of the current level rejects the forecast data and generates a budget report based on the forecast data when the current level reaches predefined level within the model.

Claims 15,16,18-19 are allowed because prior art fails to teach or suggest a method for generating a budget comprising:

Selectively presenting forecast data captured from a contributor associated with a node within a lower level of a model of an organization having a plurality of nodes hierarchically arranged into a number of levels and target data from a set of analysts to a subset of the contributors for reconciliation based on a current level of the model, receiving review information from the subset of the contributors selected based on the current level, updating the current level according to the review information and generating a budget for the organization based on the forecast data when the forecast data is approved by a contributor associated with a root node within a highest level of the model.

5. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Peterson (US 6,073,108) discloses a system for coordinating task relationships and to a task-based classification and analysis system for building and maintaining relationships between hierarchical task lists and for generating task-based budgets and variance reports. The task-based classification and analysis system employs historical cost information to adjust future budgets and charges in consideration of selected factors such as perceived benefit and value of the services, thereby allowing businesses to more effectively exploit the skills and experiences of their employees.

Matteson et al. (US Pat. 6,418,420) discloses data processing systems and more particularly to a distributed budgeting and accounting system with secure token device access. Matteson invention addresses the limitations of the prior art by providing a distributed budgeting and accounting system that utilizes secure token devices, such as smart cards or ibuttons. A secure token device is a

device that holds currency tokens and other information in a secure fashion.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAGDISH PATEL whose telephone number is (703) 308-7837. The examiner can normally be reached on 800AM-600PM M-Th.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vincent Millin can be reached on (703) 308-1065. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Jagdish N. Patel

(Primary Examiner, AU 3624)

10/08/04